

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In order to use the above-mentioned cross-linked carboxyl group containing polymer for these applications, it is necessary to prepare a homogeneous aqueous solution of the polymer. However, when the cross-linked carboxyl-containing polymer is dissolved in water, undissolved undissolved powder lumps tend to be generated, and once the undissolved undissolved powder lumps are generated, a gel-like layer is formed on its surface. Therefore, there are some defects such that the rate of penetration of water into the internal of the polymer is delayed, thereby making it difficult to obtain a homogeneous solution. Therefore, when the above-mentioned cross-linked carboxyl group-containing polymer is used, there is necessitated gradual addition of the cross-linked carboxyl-group containing polymer to water under high speed agitation, which is an operation low in production efficiency, in order to prevent the generation of undissolved undissolved powder lumps, and in some cases, there is a defect such that a specialized dissolving device for prevention of the generation of undissolved undissolved powder lumps is necessitated.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

It is desired that the amount of the compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups in the carboxyl group-containing polymer composition (A) is not less than 0.01% by weight, preferably not less than 0.05% by weight, from the viewpoint of improving the thickening property of the neutralized viscous solution prepared by using the carboxyl group-containing polymer composition of the present invention, and that the amount is not more than 10% by weight, preferably not more than 3% by weight, from the viewpoint of suppressing the generation of an insoluble gel in the above-mentioned neutralized viscous solution. The preferred amount of the compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups is 0.01 to 10% by weight, more preferably 0.05 to 3% by weight.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Further, the carboxyl group-containing polymer composition of the present invention is less likely to generate undissolved undissolved powder lumps when dissolved in water, as compared to that of a conventional cross-linked carboxyl group-containing polymer, and the polymer composition shows excellent solubility in

water. Also, since the viscosity of the aqueous solution before neutralization is very low, the polymer composition can be dissolved in water in a high concentration.

Please replace the paragraph on page 15, line 21, and bridging to page 16, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Although the function for exhibiting the excellent solubility of the carboxyl group-containing polymer composition of the present invention as described above has not yet been clarified at present, it is probably assumed to be as follows: An ether bond or hydroxyl group of the ester (c) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid, or an ethylene oxide group of the alkylene oxide adduct of an ester (d) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid, and carboxyl group of the carboxyl group-containing polymer associate to form a molecular aggregate, and an adjacent hydrophobic group (hydrocarbon compound) partially makes the carboxyl group-containing polymer hydrophobic, so that initial hydration of the carboxyl group-containing polymer is suppressed. As a result, there is exhibited an excellent solubility such that undissolved undissolved powder lumps do not tend to be generated.